

COMMON CORE
STATE STANDARDS INITIATIVE
EDUCATION FOR A NEW GENERATION

COMMON CORE STATE STANDARDS (CCSS) AND CURRICULUM Q & A

Who decides what my child will be taught?
The Arkansas Department of Education organizes annual meetings for committees of Arkansas educators to write and/or revise curriculum for various subjects. Committees are comprised of:

- Classroom teachers.
- Administrators.
- Representatives from higher education.

These individuals develop curriculum frameworks, which are ultimately reviewed and approved by the State Board of Education.

Who decides how teachers will teach?
Arkansas teachers will decide, with guidance and support from their local districts. CCSS does not dictate teachers’ instructional methods.

Who chooses textbooks and instructional resources?
Arkansas is a local control state; therefore, districts and schools choose instructional materials and determine when to purchase them. Teachers have flexibility in selecting materials, appropriate in type and complexity, that meet the CCSS. A required reading list is not provided.



Who determines grading practice?
Local school districts are responsible for setting the parameters for grading practices that individual teachers implement. CCSS does not influence grading practices in the classroom.

What steps can I take if I have a concern?
Contact your child’s teacher to discuss your concerns. The teacher will be able to explain the district’s policy regarding curriculum development and can refer you to the appropriate instructional facilitator, principal, or committee of educators, who can explain why resources, materials, or activities were chosen to address CCSS.

What is the difference between educational laws and state board policy?
Educational laws are statutes that are set by the Arkansas Legislature affecting Arkansas’s educational system. The Legislature then gives the State Board of Education the authority to establish rules to regulate the system within these statutes. This set of rules is usually what is meant by “state board policy.”



KEY TERMS

- **Curriculum-** Unit planning that is structured to allow both students and teachers to focus on specific topics and skills in greater depth. Local districts determine which textbooks and programs to use. Instructional decisions regarding student progress throughout the year are made in the classroom.
- **Common Core State Standards (CCSS)-** CCSS define the knowledge and skills students are expected to have to ensure college and career readiness. These standards were developed in collaboration with teachers, school

- administrators, and other experts to provide a clear and consistent framework to prepare students for college and the workforce. The Arkansas State Board of Education adopted the Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts/Literacy and Mathematics in July 2010.
- **Educational laws-** Statutes that are set by the Arkansas Legislature affecting Arkansas’s educational system.
- **State board policy-** Rules developed by the State Board of Education based on the authority given by the Legislature to regulate Arkansas’s education system.

ARKANSAS EDUCATORS WEIGH IN ON COMMON CORE STATE STANDARDS

“Luckily, we already have the best resource we need to face this challenge in Arkansas and around the nation: great teachers we also have new resources that we have never had before: a common curriculum ‘language’ and a national network. With 46 states adopting the Common Core State Standards, teachers from all over the nation will be able to communicate creative ways to teach our shared curriculum objectives.” -Kathy Powers, former Arkansas Teacher of the Year

“A lot of people in a lot of states are up in arms about Common Core because they believe it squeezes creativity and inquiry out of the classroom my classroom is far more creative and collaborative now than it was during my first year of teaching, and implementing Common Core has helped our English department move to a much more team-oriented, cross-curricular approach.”-Jessica Herring, Benton Middle School teacher in her blog post ‘Why I Don’t Hate Common Core’, Wisdom in the Middle, Jan. 5, 2014

SEVEN THINGS TO KNOW ABOUT COMMON CORE STATE STANDARDS

1 CAREER AND COLLEGE READINESS IS THE GOAL FOR ALL STUDENTS

As students progress through the grades, they need to build their skills and knowledge to be prepared for college and the job market.



2 ARKANSAS ASSISTED IN THE EFFORT TO DEVELOP NATIONAL STANDARDS

Arkansas teachers, researchers, education experts, higher education, and businesses collaborated to design and develop standards.



5 FOCUS ON 21ST CENTURY SKILLS

Students can apply learned skills to real-world situations to problem solve, collaborate, and create in order to be successful in future careers.



3 STANDARDS ARE ONLY THE FOUNDATION

In Arkansas, education standards provide a foundation for what students need to learn, not how standards should be taught. Teachers have created units and lessons based on standards for the students in their classrooms.



6 ARKANSAS STUDENTS DESERVE STANDARDS TO ADVANCE IN EDUCATION

Arkansas students deserve the opportunity to have the ability to compete in the job market.



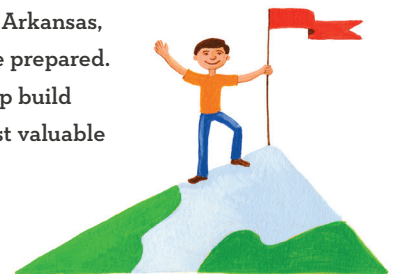
4 BETTER STANDARDS REQUIRE BETTER ASSESSMENTS

Next generation assessments developed by Arkansas educators measure the skills students have learned. Arkansas has a common set of tests for 3rd - 11th grades.



7 BEGIN WITH THE END IN MIND

To create a better future for our youth and the economy in Arkansas, we want our students to be prepared. Standards with a focus help build the foundation for our most valuable resource - our children.



THE ROLE OF PARENTS AND COMMUNITY MEMBERS

- Form partnerships to support the implementation of the CCSS.
- Collaborate with students and educators to set and achieve appropriate educational goals.
- Support academic growth by being involved in your child's education, communicating with teachers, and providing guidance.
- Provide financial, physical, and emotional support.

RESOURCES

www.arkansased.org
www.arkansasideas.org/commoncore
www.corestandards.org
www.achievethecore.org
www.parcconline.org